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FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9479
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
RUEHBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK 3080
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 2403
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 2282
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 5313
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 2232
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 5743
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 9347
RUEHTC/AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE 0859
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 6931
RUEHCN/AMCONSUL CHENGDU 1906
RUEHCHI/AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI 2335
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA 0747
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2716
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 4678
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
RUEKJCS/DIA WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 000643

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STATE FOR EAP/MLS, INR/EAP,
PACOM FOR FPA
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/25/2019

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SUBJECT: BURMA: SOME BUSINESSMEN REPORTEDLY HEARING FROM
NAY PYI TAW THAT USG WILL LIFT SANCTIONS

Classified By: P/E Chief Jennifer Harhigh for Reasons 1.4 (b and d).

¶1. (C) The GOB has recently conveyed through official channels and via at least one businessman (septel) its desire for better relations with the U.S.. According to an Embassy contact, many in the private sector here think Washington is preparing to respond positively, particularly regarding sanctions. Tour operator Brett Melzer (protect) told Embassy officers September 21 that many well-connected Burmese business leaders are extremely optimistic the U.S. will lift economic sanctions in the near term.

¶2. (C) Melzer told us many in the business community, including those with close ties to Nay Pyi Taw, are convinced the U.S. and Burma have discussed a deal in which the GOB will allow ASSK to live under "open" house arrest where she can receive visitors and communicate freely but not leave her home. In return, the U.S. will end economic sanctions (no specifics mentioned) against Burma. Melzer told us there are two versions of this rumor. Either a deal has already been struck at the "highest" levels and will be announced soon, or PM Thein Sein will pitch -- and the U.S. will accept -- the deal during the UN General Assembly.

¶3. (C) Melzer reports that business leaders are more upbeat than they have been in the last 12 years. He added that the individuals citing this alleged "deal" are rational, careful, and not prone to misplaced optimism. Several private sector businesspeople are actively investing in ventures, including in the telecom sector, which only make financial sense if sanctions are soon eased. Melzer described his contacts as well-connected to senior Burmese leaders and assessed that their optimism could only stem from being told by GOB officials that change is imminent.

